

إِنَّ الدِّينَ عِنْدَ اللَّهِ الْإِسْلَامُ

# THE MUSLIM SUNRISE

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RENAISSANCE IN AMERICA

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Correct Islamic Response  
To Salman Rushdie's  
"The Satanic Verses"

The Ahmadiyya Viewpoint

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## **WORLDWIDE AHMADIYYA MUSLIM COMMUNITY**

The Ahmadiyya Muslim Community was established in 1989 by Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad, the expected world Reformer and the Promised Messiah. The community is an embodiment of true practices of the religion of Islam. It seeks to unite mankind with its Creator, and to establish peace throughout the world. It is actively engaged in dissemination of the message of Islam. It endeavors to exert a constructive influence through social projects, educational institutions, and health services. It emphasises the urgent need of tolerance, equality and universal brotherhood. The present Supreme Head of the worldwide Ahmadiyya Muslim Community is Hazrat Mirza Ahmad, Khalifatul Masih IV.

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## THE MUSLIM SUNRISE

The Muslim Sunrise is the official journal of the American Fazl Mosque. The magazine is open for discussion on Islam as well as topics relating to other religions. It highlights the role of Islam in a changing environment. It provides a platform for public opinion on current problems confronting humanity and their solution. Opinions expressed in this magazine may not necessarily be those of the American Fazl Mosque.

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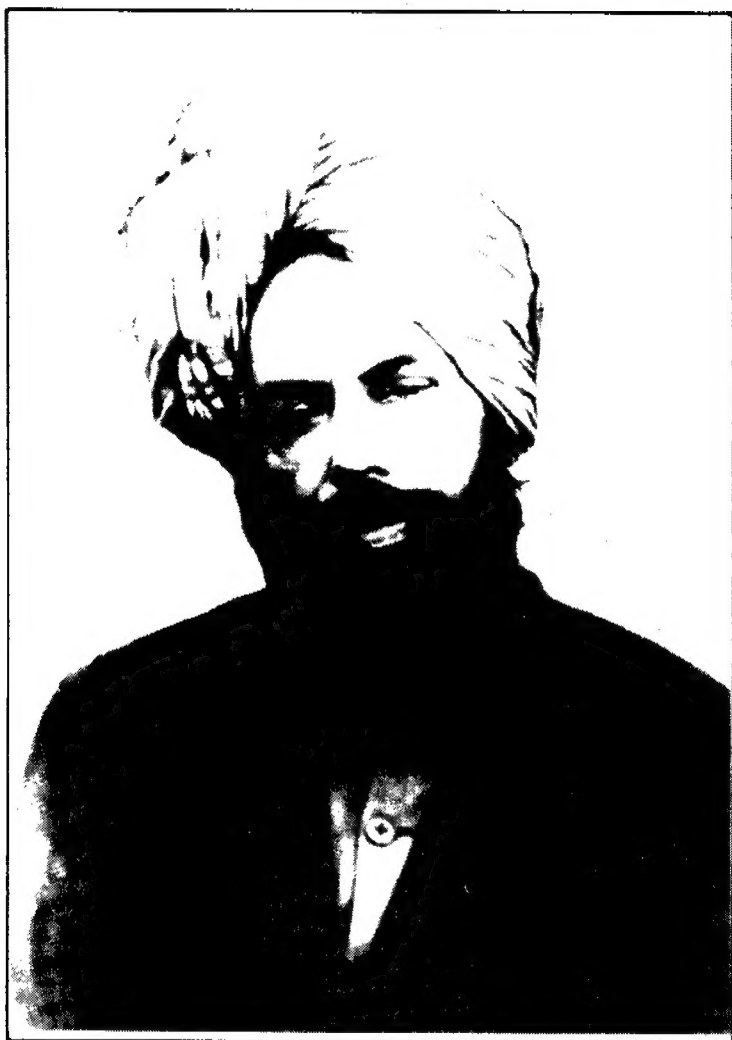
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**Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad**

The Promised Messiah and Mahdi

*Founder of Ahmadiyya Movement in Islam*

## THE EXALTED STATUS OF MUHAMMAD (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him)

*Extracts from the writings of Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad, the Promised Messiah and Mahdi.*

*I always look with wonder at this Arabian Prophet, whose name is Muhammad, peace and thousands of blessings of Allah be upon him. How exalted his status was! One cannot perceive the ultimate limit of his station. It is not within the scope of man to fully comprehend the depth and penetration of his enobling qualities. Alas! Due recognition has not been paid to his lofty rank. That Unity (of God) which had disappeared from the world was restored by this same radiant champion. He loved God most intensely; so also was his soul being consumed in deep sympathy for mankind. That is why God, Who was fully aware of the hidden excellences of his heart, exalted him above all the prophets and all the people of the past and the future, and fulfilled his heart's desire in the mere span of his lifetime. He is the fountainhead of every grace and bounty. A person who claims to have attained any spiritual excellence without confessing his indebtedness to the blessings of this Holy Prophet is not human but belongs to Satan's camp. He was made to possess the key to every excellence and the treasure of all deeper understanding was bestowed upon him. He who does not receive from him is an eternal destitute. What are we indeed and what is our worth? We shall certainly be most ungrateful if we did not confess that we obtained the real and true Faith in the Unity of God from that very Holy Prophet. Again, we gained access to the true understanding of the Ever-Living God with the help of and through the light of the same noble Prophet. For us to be the recipient of God's revelation and to be blessed with Divine communication which enables us to behold the countenance of God Almighty is a singular honour bestowed upon us by the blessings of the same illustrious Prophet.*

*(Haqeeqatul Wahi - Roohani Khaza'in, Vol. 22, pp. 118-119)*

— \* \* \* —

*The man who in his being and his attributes and his actions and through his spiritual and holy faculties set an example of perfection, in knowledge and action and in sincerity and steadfastness, and was called the perfect man*

was Muhammad, peace be upon him...The man who was most perfect as man and as Prophet, and came with full blessings, and who through a spiritual revival and resurrection manifested the first judgement in the world and revived the dead world, that blessed Prophet, the Seal of the Prophets, the leader of the righteous ones, the pride of the Prophets, was Muhammad, the chosen one, peace be upon him. Our Lord, send down on that beloved Prophet that mercy and blessing that Thou hast not sent down on anyone since the beginning of the world. Had that grand Prophet not appeared in the world then we would have no proof of the truth of lesser Prophets like Jonah, Job, Jesus son of Mary, Malachi, John, Zakaria, etc. Though they were favourites and honoured and were beloved ones of Almighty God, they are under obligation to this Prophet that they were accepted in the world as true Prophets. O Allah, send down Thy blessings on him and on his people and on his companions, all of them. Our last word is that all praise belongs to Allah, Lord of the worlds (Imamul Hujjah, p. 36).

— \* \* \* —

When we estimate justly, then out of the whole series of Prophets, we find one of high courage and alive and greatly dear to God, the Chief of Prophets, the pride and the crown of the Messengers, whose name is Muhammad Mustafa and Ahmad Mujtaba. By walking under his shadow for ten days one obtains that light which before him could not be obtained in a thousand years... We have found every light by following the immaculate Prophet and whoever follows him will also find it and he will become so accepted of God that nothing will be impossible for him. The Living God Who is hidden from people, will be his God and all false gods will be trodden under his feet. He will be blessed everywhere, and Divine Power will be with him. Peace be on him who follows the guidance (Siraj Muneer, p. 82).

— \* \* \* —

Now under heaven there is only one Prophet and only one Book. The Prophet is Muhammad, the chosen one, peace be on him, who is higher and more exalted than all Prophets and is the most perfect of Messengers and is the Khatamal Anbiya, and the best of men by following whom we find God Almighty and all the veils of darkness are lifted and the signs of true

*salvation are witnessed in this very life. The Book is the Holy Quran, which comprises true and perfect guidance and effectiveness, through which knowledge and understanding of the Divine are obtained and the heart is purified of human weaknesses, and being delivered from ignorance and heedlessness and doubts, a person arrives at the stage of complete certainty (Braheen Ahmadiyyah, p. 525, sub-footnote 3).*



*There have been millions of pure-natured people in the world and there will be more in the future, but we have found the best of all of them and the highest man of God, whose name is Muhammad, peace be on him. Allah and His angels call down blessings on the Prophet and do you who believe call down blessings on him and greet him with the greeting of peace. We shall leave aside any mention of the holy ones from among those people whose circumstances have not been described in detail in the Holy Quran. We shall express our view only with regard to the Prophets who are mentioned in the Quran like Moses, David, Jesus and other Prophets, peace be on them. We affirm it on oath, calling God to witness, that if the Holy Prophet, peace be on him, had not come into the world, and the Holy Quran had not been revealed, and we had not seen with our own eyes the blessings that we have witnessed, the truth of all past Prophets would have remained doubtful in our eyes. No reality can be gathered from mere stories, for it is quite possible that they may not be true and it is also possible that the miracles that are attributed to these Prophets might be exaggerations, for no sign of them is visible today. We cannot even ascertain for certain from the Books revealed in the past that God truly exists, because we are not assured that God speaks to man. But through the advent of the Holy Prophet, peace be on him, all these stories became real. We now realize not merely as a statement, but as a matter of experience, what converse with the Divine means and how God's signs are manifested and how prayers are answered. All this we have discovered by following the Holy Prophet, peace be on him, and what other people relate as stories we have witnessed it all. We have attached ourselves to a Prophet who manifests God to us.*

*How shall we express our gratitude to God who bestowed upon us the good fortune to follow the Prophet who is a sun for the souls of the righteous as there is a sun for the bodies. He appeared in a time of darkness and*

*illuminated the world with his light. He was neither tired nor fatigued till he purified all parts of Arabia from associating partners with God. He is the proof of his own truth for his light is present in every age and true obedience to him purifies a person as the clear and transparent water of a river cleanses dirty linen. Who has come to us with a sincere heart and has not witnessed that light, and who has knocked honestly on that door for whom it has not been opened? But the pity is that more people prefer the lower life and do not desire that higher light should enter into them (Chasma Marifat, p.28).*



*The claim of our Holy Prophet, peace be on him, shines forth like the sun and it is a great proof of his eternal life that his grace flows eternally. Even in this age a person who obeys the Holy Prophet, peace be on him, is raised from the dead and is bestowed a spiritual life not merely in imagination, but through the display of his righteous effectiveness and of heavenly help and blessings and extraordinary support of the holy spirit. He becomes a unique person from among all mankind, so much that God Almighty talks to him and discloses His special mysteries to him, and communicates His verities to him, and manifests the signs of His love and favour in him, and causes His help to descend upon him, and places His blessings in him, and makes him the mirror of His Rahmaniyyat. Wisdom flows from his tongue, and the fountains of fine points burst out of his heart. Hidden secrets are made manifest in him. God Almighty bestows a grand manifestation upon him and comes close to him. In the acceptance of his prayers, in the opening of the doors of understanding, in the disclosure of hidden mysteries and in the descent of blessings upon him, he ranks high and is supreme over all others. (Ayenae Kamalat-e-Islam, p.221)*



**ISLAMIC RESPONSE TO SALMAN RUSHDIE'S *THE SATANIC VERSES* BY THE SUPREME HEAD OF THE WORLDWIDE AHMADIYYA MUSLIM COMMUNITY  
HAZRAT MIRZA TAHIR AHMAD,  
KHALIFATUL MASHI IV**

(Following is a summary of two Friday sermons delivered on February 24, and on March 3, 1989.)

وَلَا تَسُبُّوا الَّذِينَ يَدْعُونَ مِنْ دُونِ اللَّهِ فَيَسُبُّوا  
اللَّهَ عَدْوًا بِغَيْرِ عِلْمٍ كَذَلِكَ زَيْنًا لِكُلِّ أُمَّةٍ  
عَمَلُهُمْ ثُمَّ إِلَىٰ رَبِّهِمْ مَرْجِعُهُمْ فَيُنَبِّئُهُم بِمَا  
كَانُوا يَعْمَلُونَ ﴿٩﴾

"And abuse not those that they call upon besides Allah, lest they, out of spite, abuse Allah in their ignorance. Thus unto every people have We caused their doings to seem fair. Then unto their Lord is their return; and He will inform them of what they used to do." (6:109)

Salman Rushdie's *Satanic* book is not an individual effort but result of a conspiracy in action. It is an extension of the same mischief against Islam as done in the Dark Ages by Christian Orientalists in the form of open attacks on Islam. They selected only that material from Islamic literature that could be used to attack Islam, and thus they claimed to remain impartial in proving the alleged weaknesses of Islamic teachings. To our good fortune, the Promised Messiah (a.s.) exposed their deceptive methodology, and presented Islamic teachings in their true light.

*The Satanic Verses* is definitely not the work of one individual; Salman Rushdie was offered a large sum of money in order to destroy all kinds of good thought about Islam by a larger group that harbours ill against Islam. He was provided with all those points that were used by the Christian orientalists to make subtle attacks on the honor of the Holy Prophet of Islam in highly sophisticated debates with the Muslim theologians.

To destroy socialism, to eradicate forces opposed to the West and to publicize Muslim crimes in exaggeration, the Western countries have allied themselves with the Muslim countries that hold extremists positions on Islam. Western attitude is hypocritical: they strengthen extremist regimes but continue to give them bad publicity. Khomeini has severely hurt the ego of the West. Although he has a distorted concept of Islam, he is not two-faced in what he says and does. When Khomeini issued the death sentence against Rushdie, the West found this opportunity to defame Islam. The extreme reaction against Khomeini's death sentence indicates insincerity and political falsity and hypocrisy of the West. The West remained completely silent when some Muslim mullahs openly put a price on the head of the Imam of the worldwide Ahmadiyya community, and the West has no strong reaction to the continuous persecution of the Ahmadis in Pakistan.

### What Islam Teaches

Islam does not permit Muslims to attack one's pious and respected leaders; one must respect other religions. Islam has established the right of freedom of speech; but limits of decency are also established. Muslims must not abuse even false gods, for fear that in return Allah and the Holy Prophet may be abused. There must be a balance and justice to the freedoms granted a person. Unfortunately those ignorant of the real intent of the West are carried away by its false propaganda: they are presented with the wrong concept of freedom of expression. In defining their concept of freedom of expression, the West is weakened by its shamelessness and by its drift away from religion.

Muslims must use their intelligence and adopt a course where others' feelings are not injured. They should not have reacted with vehemency, for in doing so, the Muslims have inflicted so much more harm to Islam: *The Satanic Verses* by itself was not selling well, and some countries had already banned its publication. Therefore, some political opportunists carried out a baseless campaign and harmed Islam. By arousing a violent reaction they were very helpful to the enemy. Muslims must reply with prudence to protect the honor of the Holy Prophet in accordance with the teaching of the Holy Quran. Recourse to violence is counterproductive. Forgiveness and punishment lie only in the hands of God.

## Instructions for Jamaat Ahmadiyya

The Jamaat should devote itself for good in such an effective effort as a result of which all filthy attacks may be utterly defeated. The new generation should require an expertise in the local languages, produce journalists in large numbers who know the language of the newspaper and media, so as to make a deep study of Islam to use our knowledge in the service of Islam and in the defense of the Holy Prophet. There will be other attacks against Islam, so we must have courage and strength to defend our beliefs.

Hazrat Khalifatul Masih IV has published a book *Murder in the Name of Allah*. Wide circulation of the book will help remove many misconceptions about Islam. It is a translation of *Mazhab ke Nam per Khoon*, a book in Urdu which shows how Islam is being exploited by the Mullahs. The original contents have been expanded to include an appraisal of capital punishment for apostacy, and growing militancy in some Muslim countries. Accordingly, two new chapters have been added.

*The Satanic Verses* even though is an extremely filthy work, a board of scholars will be appointed to analyze it. However, letters of thanks should be written to those companies that have not permitted its circulation. Prayer is the key to resolving any hardships: pray for those people who are in the wrong and for those who have seen the right path. The Jaamat should show lawful Islamic reaction with great magnificence, expressing true feelings of care about the honor of Islam and its Holy Founder (peace and blessings of Allah be on him).

## Teachings of the Holy Quran on the fundamental question of freedom of conscience and of the pen:

And that it may warn those who say, 'Allah has taken unto Himself a son.'

No knowledge have they thereof, nor had their fathers. Greivous is the word that comes from their mouths. They speak naught but a lie.

So haply thou wilt grieve thyself to death for sorrow after them if they believe not in this discourse.

وَيُنذِرَ الَّذِينَ قَالُوا اتَّخَذَ اللَّهُ وَلَدًا ۚ  
مَا لَهُمْ بِهِ مِنْ عِلْمٍ وَلَا لِآبَائِهِمْ كَبُرَتْ  
كَلِمَةً تَخْرُجُ مِنْ أَفْوَاهِهِمْ إِنْ يَقُولُونَ إِلَّا  
كَذِبًا ۝  
فَلَعَلَّكَ بَاحِعٌ النَّفْسَ عَنْ أَتَائِهَا هُمْ إِنْ يَمِيزُوا  
بِغَدَاةِ الْحَدِيثِ الْغَفْلَا ۝

(18:5-7 Al-Kahf)

Christians have made a false and monstrous allegation that Jesus was born of God and Mary. But Allah has given no authority to man that he may punish those who have violated the sanctity of Allah. Do good deeds to defend Islam for they are linked with suffering of the heart and its sincerity.

Then, because of their breaking of their covenant, and their denial of the Signs of Allah, and their seeking to kill the Prophets unjustly, and their saying: 'Our hearts are wrapped in covers,' - nay, but Allah has sealed them because of their disbelief, so they believe not but little -

فَبِمَا نَقْضِهِمْ مِيثَاقَهُمْ وَكَفَرِهِمْ بِآيَاتِ اللَّهِ  
وَقَتْلِهِمُ الرُّسُلَ يُعَصِّرَنَّ قُلُوبَنَا  
عَلَفُ بَلْ طَبَعَ اللَّهُ عَلَيْهَا بِكُفْرِهِمْ فَلَا يُؤْمِنُونَ  
إِلَّا قَلِيلًا ۝

(4:156 Al-Nisa)

This verse refers to the Jews the opponents of Christianity.

The Holy Quran has stated two types of wicked people:

- wicked people who attack Allah,
- some wicked people who are attacking those who are attacking Allah.

Wherever any lies and falsehood are seen, you should hoist the flag of Jihad against it.

And He has already revealed to you in the Book that, when you hear the Signs of Allah being denied and mocked at, sit not with them until they engage in a talk other than that: for in that case you would be like them. Surely, Allah will assemble the hypocrites and the disbelievers in Hell, all together;

وَقَدْ نَزَّلَ عَلَيْكَ فِي الْكِتَابِ أَنْ إِذَا سَمِعْتُمْ آيَاتَ اللَّهِ يُكْفَرُ بِهَا وَيُسْتَهْزَأُ بِهَا فَلَا تَقْعُدُوا مَعَهُمْ حَتَّى يَخُوضُوا فِي حَدِيثٍ غَيْرِهِ ۚ إِنَّكُمْ إِذًا مِثْلَهُمْ ۚ إِنَّ اللَّهَ جَامِعُ الْمُنَافِقِينَ وَالْكَافِرِينَ فِي جَهَنَّمَ جَمِيعًا ﴿٣٩﴾

(4:141 Al-Nisa)

You should quit the company of those who slander Allah and the Holy Prophet, but must not break from them permanently; join them again when they discontinue the ridicule, for this carries wisdom.

And when the seest those who engage in vain discourse concerning Our Signs, then turn thou away from them until they engage in a discourse other than that. And if Satan cause thee to forget, then sit not, after recollection, with the unjust people.

وَإِذَا رَأَيْتَ الَّذِينَ يَخُوضُونَ فِي آيَاتِنَا فَأَعْرِضْ عَنْهُمْ حَتَّى يَخُوضُوا فِي حَدِيثٍ غَيْرِهِ ۚ وَإِمَّا يُنسِيَنَّكَ الشَّيْطَانُ فَلَا تَقْعُدْ بَعْدَ الذِّكْرِ مَعَ الْقَوْمِ الظَّالِمِينَ ﴿٤٠﴾

And those who are righteous are not at all accountable for them, but *their duty* is to admonish them, that they may fear God.

وَمَا عَلَى الَّذِينَ يَتَّقُونَ مِنْ حِسَابِهِمْ مِنْ شَيْءٍ وَلَكِنْ ذِكْرِي لَعَلَّهُمْ يَتَّقُونَ ﴿٤١﴾

(6:69-70 Al-Anam)

When hearing any ill or absurd talk, do not pursue to kill them, but quit their company.

There are two separate spheres: sphere of physical (material) body and sphere of (intellectual) expression. Physical sphere can be defended with physical force, while sphere of expression should be defended through words. It is a Muslim's duty to defend himself in the like manner that he has been offended. If these teachings were followed, the entire situation which arose with *The Satanic Verses* could have been reversed and avoided. We must publish a series of articles which reject all allegations in the book through logical reasoning and in accordance with the dictates of wisdom. All Islamic governments should show care and backing of Islam and display displeasure in the light of the above quoted Quranic commandments. Iran and Islam are being projected as one and the same thing in the West.

Since they uphold the sanctity of the freedom of speech so dear to them, why the Western people are not taking up the pen and condemning the filth of the novel? Their complete silence in this regards clearly indicates that both political and Islamic enmities are involved. Two weapons of the West that we as Muslims should employ are: (1) the use of world opinion in our favor and (2) economic pressure. Both are civilized weapons. We should be brave and face the enemy who has made the attack and use the same weapons in our defence. The world has been influenced by the Western propaganda for it conceives the Muslims as the oppressors and the West as the oppressed.

If the Islamic world has hired the respected, intelligent Western writers to immediately write against *The Satanic Verses* and had spent their money wisely, then there would have begun a huge battle in world opinion. The wealthy Arab countries could have put their money to useful efforts and presented the Muslim point of view clearly to the world. The world of Islam should unite on the point of protecting the Holy Prophet, and no faction should separate itself from all other Muslims simply because one's opinion differs. If the Muslims unite on religious and economic aim, then no onslaught can succeed in harming them. Therefore, there is an urgent need for an International Conference on how to defend the honor of the Holy Prophet on the lines prescribed by Islam and the Holy Quran.

We must expose the full the evil intents of our common enemy. Ahmadis with power of moral values and with power of character have a great position in the world. They should use all the influence that they have in the service of Islam and in the service of the Holy Prophet, Hazrat Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allah be on him). We must raise a powerful voice in the world. The Ahmadiyya Muslim Jamaat should see that the families of those martyred are well taken care of, and visited frequently by Ahmadis. No power in the world can harm the love you have for the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be on him).

*The Sun, Maryland, February 27, 1989*

## **Islamic Chapter Rejects Rushdie Death Sentence**

*By Frank P.L. Somerville  
Religion Editor of the Sun*

The Baltimore chapter of an international organization of Islamic moderates has rejected Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini's order to kill the British author Salman Rushdie, calling the death sentence a perversion of the prophet Muhammed's teachings of peace and justice.

At the same time, the adherents of this group, Ahmadiyya Movement in Islam, are as emphatic as other Baltimore-area Moslems in denouncing the new Rushdie novel, "The Satanic Verses," and demanding its removal from bookstores and libraries.

What Moslems need to do - but without recourse to death threats or any violence - is to persuade people of all faiths "that the book has very clearly been written with a prejudiced mind and with malicious intentions," the head of Ahmadiyya Movement's national office in Washington told its Baltimore followers on a visit here last week.

Sheik Mubarak Ahmad quoted from the Koran, Islam's holy scripture: "There shall be no compulsion in faith...Call unto the way of thy Lord with wisdom and goodly exhortation, and reason with them in the way that is best."

The Ahmadiyya group was described as large and influential worldwide, with 10 million members in 117 countries, but "very small, though growing" in Baltimore.

"In the United States, England and other countries, we are not only protesting against this publication in the real Islamic manner but are also employing ourselves to correcting public opinion in the controversy," said Sheik Ahmad, the group's U.S. president. He spoke Thursday night at a meeting of Baltimore-area Moslems in the Garrison Boulevard center of the

### Ahmadiyya Movement.

"A lot of damage has been caused by the wrong and misguided manner that much of the protest has taken up to now," he said. "Public opinion has been provoked into becoming highly prejudicial."

Calling Mr. Rushdie's writings "such as would revolt any decent-minded human being" he conceded that "most people in the West cannot understand why Moslems are urging that the book be withdrawn from circulation.

"They see Islam as being opposed to the concept of freedom of expression," he said. "That is absolutely wrong...but the book is full of fabrications and very abusive language concerning personalities revered by a fourth of the world's population.

"Every Moslem without doubt was injured with the publication of 'The Satanic Verses.' It is the filthy language used and the distorted image of prophets of God which is highly objectionable."

But while claiming Moslems everywhere are deeply hurt by the Rushdie work, he said: "Islam is not a religion of killing. It is not a religion of terrorism. It is not a religion of destroying the peace. Every step must be taken through whatever means we can to establish peace and harmony."

Mubasher Ahmad, the Baltimore regional missionary of the Ahmadiyya Movement, agreed with its president that no verse in the Koran supports the Iranian ayatollah's death sentence for Mr. Rushdie. The British author, as a former Moslem, is "apostate," he said, but the widely held Islamic view that apostasy is punishable by death is a "misguided" one refuted by eminent scholars of the Koran.

Moreover, the methods of Ayatollah Khomeini and his followers "are counterproductive - they are making the writer richer and more famous," he added.

Several other Baltimore-area Moslem leaders, including the imam of



the Baltimore Masjid and both the president and the director of the Islamic Society of Baltimore, said last week that Islamic law was clear in prescribing the death penalty for Mr. Rushdie.

***York Daily Record, February 21, 1989***

### **York Moslems Disagree with Khomeini**

*By Cameron Texter  
Daily Record staff writer*

Although British writer Salman Rushdie maligned their religion, Aisha Sharif and Shahida Muhaimin, both of York, don't damn him to eternal hell fire as Iran's Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini has.

Only God can do that, said Mrs. Sharif and Mrs. Muhaimin.

The two are among the 72 members of of York's Ahmadiyya Muslim Community-Noor Mosque, 334 S. George St. Like many members of the Islamic religion, Mrs. Sharif and Mrs. Muhaimin felt insulted by Mr. Rusdie's book, *The Satanic Verses*, although neither has read it.

Mrs. Sharif has looked over passages from the book, which was enough to make her not want to read it. But she said the book outraged Moslems worldwide because it downgrades their religion and prophets.

"One thing people must understand is Moslems love the holy prophet Mohammed very deeply," she said. "Our concern is based on the belief that our prophets never committed sins. We feel intolerant of people who smear our prophets.

***The Washington Post, February 18, 1989***

### **Rushdie Protests Supported Novel Blasphemous, Moslems Here Say**

*By Marjorie Hyer*

*Washington Post Staff Writer*

Mubashar Ahmad of Baltimore, a missionary of the Ahmadia movement, concedes that Rushdie is "free to have personal beliefs...but how you express those beliefs is the question. There are limits" in writing about deeply held religious beliefs, he said. "He has hurt the feelings of many Moslems," he said. The prophet Mohammed "is revered by almost a billion people." In America, a novel that promotes anti-Semitism would not be acceptable, he said, in an analogy made by several area Moslems. Ahmad urged continued peaceful protests against the book, but he would like to see more efforts to educate Moslems in their faith. "We should be making people informed" both about the life of the prophet and about the Koran, he said, so they will not be influenced by works such as Rushdie's novel.

*The Minnesota Daily, February 22, 1989*

**Rushdie**

As an active member of the Islamic community in Minnesota, I feel compelled to comment on events coinciding with the publication of Salman Rushdie's *Satanic Verses* in the United States.

While it is true that we live in a "free society," almost everyone would acknowledge that we observe many behavioral boundaries. We don't freely sell child pornography or illicit drugs, for example. The law defines these activities as outside the realm of appropriate moral conduct. While Rushdie's views are not technically illegal, I submit that because they are as offensive to Muslims, as either of the above-mentioned activities, an Islamic outcry is not unwarranted, even in the U.S. Simply stated, Rushdie's thinly veiled metaphors about the life of Mohammed (Peace be upon him) are historically inaccurate and theologically incorrect. Countries like India and Pakistan, which have banned this book, have not taken a step toward intolerance; rather, they have stood up for the decent, honest and inherently peaceful values of Mohammed (P.B.U.) and Islam.

Tanweer H. Khan

Member, Ahmediyya Movement in Islam

***The Houston Post/Religion Digest, February 25, 1989***

**Angry Houston Moslems Divided  
Over Death Sentence for Author**

*By Richard Vara  
Post Religion Writer*

Rashad said Moslems were offended by the Western reaction in defense of Rushdie. "When Moslems rise to defend their religion the whole world is in an uproar," he said. Moslems believe in tolerance and freedom and would never have said anything if a non Moslem had written the book, he said.

But not all Moslems agreed with the death sentence, said M.A. Mirza of the Pakistan-based Ahmadiyya Movement. "The consensus of our community is that we strongly condemn this book," said Mirza. He attacked it as false and slanderous.

But Islam does not support killing or threats, he said. He said Mohammed faced severe persecution in his life but did not retaliate. "We learn from his life that he always prayed for those people (persecutors)," he said.

He acknowledged that most Moslems throughout the world are demanding Rushdie's life, but Mirza prefers that Moslems write books and articles to present a true picture of Mohammed to Westerners.

***A Letter to 'Voice of the People',  
Chicago Tribune, Chicago, IL  
February 27, 1989***

Dear Sir:

This is in response to "War of the Word: Faiths, Languages and the Art of the Novel" by Salman Rushdie. (Tribune, February 26, 1989).

1. I find Rushdie's self-righteous assertions only slightly less disgusting, as compared to his "Satanic" book. He has revealed his ignorance to Islam and its history, and made patently false and misleading statements. It is not the "Contemporary Thought Police", (as he calls the present day "tribe of clerics") who "have turned Muhhammad into a perfect being, his life into a perfect life, and revelation into the unambiguous, clear event that it originally was not."

In the Holy Quran, God, Himself, had told the Holy Prophet that he possessed the highest moral excellences (68:5), was an excellent exemplar (33:22), merciful to mankind (21:108), possessed perfect qualities (20:2) and, allegiance to him was allegiance to God (26:11).

2. We, also, have the unimpeachable testimony of hundreds of thousands of his companions, who underwent an unprecedented transformation and became models of perfection, themselves. Many of them, and thousands since then through the centuries, have attained spiritual perfection, communion with God, and shown mighty signs as a testament to their perfect spiritual mentor, lord and master, Muhammad. (PBUH).
3. Numerous scholars and writers throughout history have marveled at the grand stature and unparalleled achievements of Muhammad (PBUH). For example, W. Montgomery Watt writes in "Muhammad at Medina" (p. 336), "The more one reflects on the history of Muhammad and of early Islam, the more one is amazed at the vastness of his achievement. Circumstances presented him with an opportunity such as few men have had, but the man was fully matched with the hour. Had it not been for his gifts as seer, statesman and administrator, and behind these his trust in God and firm belief that God had sent him, a noble chapter in the history of mankind would have remained unwritten."

Lamartine, in "History of Turkey" (p. 276) writes, "Philosopher, orator, apostle, legislator, warrior, conqueror 'of ideas', restorer of rational dogmas; the founder of twenty terrestrial empires and of one spiritual empire, that is MUHAMMAD. As regards all standards by which human greatness may be measured, we may ask, 'Is there any man greater than he?'"

4. By choosing a fictitious and utterly baseless fable about "Satanic Verses", which had been categorically and convincingly refuted and rejected by 99.9% of Islamic devines and scholars, Rushdie has maliciously sought to assault the very soul of Islam.
5. We regret and denounce all the violent furor, and particularly, the death threats against Rushdie and the publishers. However, Rushdie must bear responsibility for his deliberate and mischievous distortions, contemptuous ridicule and trivialization of Islam and its Holy Prophet, (PBUH).

His call to arms in this battle he is waging against the Faith, is, at best, disingenuous, and at worst, malevolent and "Satanic".

In the words of Rushdie, himself, "It's his words against ours."

Sincerely,

Masood A. Qazi, M.D.

**York Dispatch**  
*February 27, 1989*

## **Letters to the Editor**

### **Devotion Negates Novel's Ill**

Countless of us were taught the consoling rhyme, "Sticks and stones may break my bones, but words will never harm me" as children when we ran home crying after painful remarks about our hair or our glasses or our teeth or our clothes or our names or many other childish insults.

We learned that unless someone actually, physically touched us in a harmful manner, all the name-calling in the world meant nothing. I still teach this to my children, particularly as we walk through the mall or supermarket or toy store and someone yells out "Hey Ninja!" or "Is this a hold-up?" in response to my veil.

Now the media is telling us of emotional reactions around the world to a book which allegedly casts insults against the name and character of the Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings of God be upon him.

As a point of information, the Arabs, before the advent of Islam, also called Muhammad, peace and blessings of God be upon him, a name. They called him "Saddeequ" - the truthful, because of his exceptional devotion to truth and honesty. Even after his receiving divine revelations and Islam spreading all around him, he had the opportunity to be called king or emperor. But he rejected those earthly titles for the lasting one of Messenger of Allah.

It matter not what people would like to attribute to the Prophet of Islam, peace and blessing of God be upon him. There are tens of millions of Muslims like me, worldwide, who, through divine commandment, affix "peace and blessing of Allah be upon him" whenever they read or speak his exalted name and that prayer more than suffices to negate any detractor or ill-wisher.

Ayesha Bashir  
York

*Oregonian, February 22, 1989*

### **Powell's Books Takes Precautions After 'Satanic Verses' Threats**

A statement issued by the Portland Rizwan Mosque, affiliated with the Pakistani Ahmadiyya Movement in Islam, condemned the "irresponsible behavior" of Rushdie and his publishers but also decried threats and violence.

"Islamic teachings contained in the Holy Koran and examples set by the holy prophet of Islam do not allow any violence against anyone on the basis of his faith or views," the statement said. "Violence and disruption created in this regard is uncalled for and against the teachings of Islam."

*The Star - Democrat, February 28, 1989. Easton, Maryland*

### **Moslems Decry Death Sentence**

BALTIMORE (AP) - The Baltimore chapter of an international organization of Islamic moderates has rejected Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini's order to kill the British author Salman Rushdie, but agrees the book is an insult to Islam.

The leader of the local chapter of Ahmadiyya Movement in Islam called the death sentence a perversion of the prophet Mohammed's teachings of peace and justice.

Adherents of the group however denounced the novel, *The Satanic Verses*, and demanded its removal from the bookstores and libraries.

"The book has very clearly been written with a prejudiced mind and with malicious intentions," Sheikh Mubarak Ahmad, the head of the Ahmadiyya Movement's national office in Washington told its Baltimore followers on a visit here last week.

Mubasher Ahmad, the Baltimore regional missionary of the Ahmadiyya Movement, agreed with its president that no verse in the Koran supports the Iranian ayatollah's death sentence for Rushdie. The British author, as a former Moslem, is "apostate," he said, but the widely held Islamic view that apostasy is punishable by death is a "misguided" one that is refuted by eminent scholars of the Koran.

**India Tribune, March 4, 1989**

**Letter to the Editor**

### **'The Satanic Verses' a Worthless Book**

Glen Ellyn, IL: The so called Satanic Verses which have been attributed to the Holy Prophet Muhammed as his revelation from Satan (God forbid), neither can be proved by the references nor can be supported by the history. It is just a baseless story which was flashed by the opponents of the Holy Prophet i.e. idolators at Mecca themselves to save their faces for the reason that they prostrated along with Muslims in the Holy Shrine (Ka'ba) at Mecca after recitation of genuine verses of the Holy Quran, concluding that Muhammed had recited some verses which had supported idolatory. Furthermore they fabricated this story to attract the refugees back to Mecca who had migrated to Ethiopia due to their merciless persecution by the idolators, disseminating the rumor that they had embraced Islam.

The truth of the matter is that the whole context in the Holy Quran gives lie to this baseless assertion. Not only do the verses that follow but the whole chapter of the Quran contains an unsparing condemnation of idolatory and an uncompromising insistence on Divine unity. It is strange that this patent fact should have escaped by the author if the notorious and the most hated book, 'The Satanic Verses'. The book contains a distortion of the real facts along with other foul and most heinous attacks on the holy personages of Islam. The book is, no doubt slaughtering the truth and is certainly a great tool in the hands of satan to promote hatred among different factions of a broader and peaceful society.



Ironically, the West cannot comprehend nor conceive the highest regards, the Muslims have for the holy personages and especially for the Holy Prophet (Peace and blessing of Allah be upon him). The Muslims are the people who are ready to lay down their lives and possessions to uphold the honor and respect of their most beloved master. They would prefer to die rather than endure the disgrace that they should make peace and remain silent and become friendly with these insensitive killers of the truth who promote hatred mentioning his holiness' name with contempt, attributing to him baseless and the most damaging fabrications in this sort of contemptuous and worthless book. Persons like Salman Rushdie are not well wishers of the humanity for they create numberless difficulties for it to promote their selfish goals.

Islam is the most dynamic and simple religion which is very near to nature and human reason. It is the religion which teaches unity of the purest nature disassociating different persons or dieties with God. The Prophet of Islam, Muhammed (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him), never ever compromised with idol worship. He carried out his noble mission with unrelenting vigor and fearless devotion, with love and compassion. All sort of bandishments, bribes, cajolery or intimidation failed to move him an inch from his set purpose.

We are there to respond to any objection raised against Islam. Any criticism on the life of the holy prophet, Islam, or the Holy Quran can be handled in a very courteous and befitting manner but to heap abuses and foul language shamelessly is not a deed of a decent person. We are peace loving people. Islam literally means peace with fellow beings and submission to the Will of God and advocates peace. However, we are shocked and we are hurt by the book. We strongly condemn this outrageous act and protest this slap on the very face of humanity.

Rashid Yahya

*The Press & Sun Bulletin, March 16, 1989, Owego, NY*

## Letters to the Editor

### All Should Condemn 'The Satanic Verses'

This is in reference to your story about Salman Rushdie's book *The Satanic Verses*.

For the information of those civilized people who would love to find the truth about this book, it is enough to say that this book is full of wild vilifications and desecration of the most venerable personalities of Islam and, and deserves strongest condemnation by all the peace-loving people of the world irrespective of faith and personal propensities.

For Moslems, the belief in all of the prophets before the prophet of Islam is one of the Articles of Faith. This is the eternal truth, which was told by the Holy Prophet Muhammed. In this way Moslems consider Muhammed as the "Best Exemplar".

If someone like Rushdie writes a derogatory book about this great prophet it cannot hide the facts. The holy prophet of Islam's life is like an open book. Rushdie's attempt is just like spitting at the moon. Moslems recognize that people behave according to their level of culture; however, it is hard to accept that it is right for anyone to publish and spread obscene literature about any prophet and make a business out of it.

There is no doubt that a cardinal principle of democracy is the right of freedom of expression, speech and writing. But there is no concept of unbridled freedom without regard to the norms of decency and susceptibilities of others in a democratic system.

Rights without responsibilities is not the rule of democracy but is a law of jungle which helps only to destroy peace and tranquility and creates lawlessness, lewdness, disturbance and disorder. Such a behavior cannot be tolerated by a civilized government.

Rushdie's other book, which brought him the \$10,000 Booker Prize, also brought a mishap; Indian Prime Minister Indira Gandhi had to be given a public apology by both Rushdie and his publishers in answer to her libel action. They also paid costs and agreed to remove from all future editions the passages objected to by her.

S. RAFIQ AHMAD

Owego

*North Side Journal, Thursday, March 16, 1989, St. Louis*

### 'Satanic Verses' Reveal Disdain For Muslim Culture

To The Editor:

The irony of the situation will likely escape all but the most perspective observers. However, the case of Salman Rushdie and his "Satanic Verses" is dripping with irony.

In May of last year, I attempted to publish an article in a local paper about the viewpoint that Islam has about the Christian adoration of the son of Mary. The editor, in his concern for the feelings and sensibilities of his readers, decided not to publish my article.

Further, the world has stood by and watched for more than 15 years as the most basic and fundamental rights of the Ahmadi Muslims of Pakistan were trampled in the dust. The same fanatics who now call for the death of Salman Rushdie, actually killed Ahmadis, burned down the mosques of Ahmadis, and imprisoned, for a period of up to three years, any Ahmadi who claimed to be a Muslim. Any Ahmadi who called the Azan (the Muslim Call to Prayer) was sentenced to three years in prison!

The now-departed dictator of Pakistan, Zia-ul-Haq, traveled to London and from the soil of that "freedom-loving" country vowed to exterminate the "cancer of Ahmadiyyat." Even as I write this article, there are Ahmadi men in prison in Pakistan whose only crime was that they declared themselves to be Muslims!

The case of Salman Rushdie is similar in that the same fanatics who had been supported by the United States and the West, directly or indirectly, and who under the watchful eye of the USA and the West, attacked and burned and imprisoned innocent Ahmadis, now have turned their ignorance and madness against the West.

Every people have within their culture certain taboos. For example, you can talk about a European man's mother and get away with it most of the time. But, you talk about an Afro-American man's mother you know you've got to fight and the man might hurt you. Everybody understands that. Even though you might know it's wrong to hurt somebody or even kill somebody because they talk about your mama, when they do it, you lose all control. And all the people will understand. "Hey, he shouldn't have talked about the man's Mamma, " people will say.

Italians and Spaniards and the French are known to be very sensitive about their honor. If you offend their honor, they will go to no end to get revenge. We don't understand it, but we all know it and accept it as the culture of those people.

Well, the Muslims feel more than that about their Allah and their Prophet and his wives. You can disagree about Islam, and no one will force you to be a Muslim, but you cannot insult and slander the feelings of the Muslim people. They will be unable to control themselves, whether they know (their actions are ) wrong or not.

Salman Rushdie is a fool and a puppet in addition to being disrespectful and uncaring about other people's feelings and sentiments.

He cannot be and will not be allowed to injure the feelings of the community. In effect, Rushdie has stood in the town square and has talked about the "mothers and the believers." Well, now he has to live with the consequences of his actions.

All the writers and so-called "champions of free-speech" were nowhere to be seen or heard when these same fanatics who now threaten

Rushdie, actually killed innocent Ahmadi Muslims.

Virtually every senator and congressman in the U.S. Congress and all of the key people in the State Department and its allied agencies have been made aware of the situation concerning the atrocities against Ahmadis, but most of them have turned a blind eye to the situation for political expediency. Now their blindness has infected them, and they must ponder the consequences of what they have supported and nurtured.

The "Satanic Verses" of Rushdie have once again made clear the dramatic differences between the peoples of the West and Islam.

Allah and His prophet are more dear to the people of Islam than their own lives, their wives or even their children. This reality is hard for a materialistic West to comprehend, but comprehension is not required. Respect is.

Peace-loving nations the world over immediately recognized the "Satanic Verses" for what they are - an obvious attempt to promote strife and discord, not to mention the hurt feelings they caused - and promptly banned the publication and dissemination of the book.

We hope and pray that the sincere and peace-loving peoples of America will realize that the "Satanic Verses" are just that...satanic!

And our final words are: All praise belongs to Allah, Lord of all the worlds.

**Abu Bakr Ladd**  
The Sadiq Mosque  
St. Louis

*The Baltimore Sun, March 17, 1989, Maryland.*

## **Moslem Speaker Gives Villa Julie Class Another View**

By Frank P.L. Somerville  
Religion Editor of the Sun

The bitter international controversy over an Islamic leader's death sentence for British writer Salman Rushdie brought them together, but a soft-spoken Moslem guest lecturer gave 35 students at Baltimore County's Villa Julie College yesterday a benign view of his faith.

Mubasher Ahmad, the Baltimore regional missionary of the moderate Ahmadiyya Movement in Islam, told the "Patterns of Thought in Religion" class at the college that for Iran's Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini to "put a price on the head" of the British author was "not justified" by the Koran, the Islamic scriptures.

It was equally unjustified, however, of then-President Ronald Reagan to put a price on the head of Col. Muammar el Kadafi, Mr. Ahmad said, referring to the U.S. air attack in 1986 on the home of the Libyan leader that killed his baby daughter and injured two of his sons.

"It is not a Moslem concept to fight," any more than the wars fought in the name of Christianity down through the centuries represent a Christian concept, said the Islamic spokesman.

The Kadafi-Rushdie comparison drew the only argumentative response from the class during two hours of steady questioning of the visitor, which ended with polite applause.

"I don't think death is ever justified," said one young woman, "but the reasons were different. The reason for the attack on Kadafi was his crimes - as opposed to writing a book."

Mr. Ahmad drew appreciative laughter from the class when he blamed its negative preconceptions of Islam on the press. "The problem is the news

media," he said. "They hype the bad things and put the good news [such as a recent interview with him in *The Baltimore Sun*] on the back page."

Roger D. Bridges, the Southern Baptist seminary graduate who is teaching Villa Julie's course on major religions for the fourth year, said he had never asked a representative of Islam to lecture his class before. It was the controversy over the Rushdie book, "The Satanic Verses," and the newspaper interview to which Mr. Ahmad alluded that led to the invitation, Dr. Bridges said.

Mr. Ahmad was clearly surprised that the students' first five questions yesterday touched on Islamic customs and dress but avoided the issues of freedom and expression and terrorism raised by the Rushdie example.

When the sixth questioner simply wanted to know whether Islam forbade a former Moslem such as Mr. Rushdie to change his faith, the guest lecturer said it did not, but he seemed stunned by the ensuing silence, asking, "No more questions about Rushdie?"

Before the two hours were over, the Rushdie affair was explored fully, with Mr. Ahmad stating that the Ayatollah Khomeini did not speak for him and millions of other Moslems but that those same millions were as offended by the Rushdie book as members of this class would probably be if the author had blasphemed Jesus or Moses.

The speaker's moderate Ahmadiyya organization was described as large and influential in 117 countries, but still small among the estimated 15,000 Moslems living in the Baltimore area.

## **One Ahmadi Muslim's View Of The Controversy Over *The Satanic Verses* In Terms of U.S. Law and Islamic Law**

A.F. Umar Khan

Fury over Salman Rushdie's latest book, *The Satanic Verses*, has gained a prominent place in the recent press. Muslim extremists call for Rushdie's death as an apostate. Even the most moderate of Muslims would like to see the book banned. Most Americans see this as a First Amendment issue. Their defiance was embodied in public readings from the book. Such reaction was poorly aimed because it hurt all Muslims, not just the extremists.

In an interview conducted in Ireland, Hazrat Mirza Tahir Ahmad, Khalifatul Masih IV, spoke about Rushdie's book:

For Muslims this book is an offense against all that any religion stands for. It is an affront to human decency, to values. Mr. Rushdie has completely ignored the feelings of a billion Muslims. It is even more offensive because it is a work of fiction, for Mr. Rushdie has felt free from all restraints that might have operated if he was dealing with Islam as a scholar. As you are aware, Islam has been studied critically by Western scholars for many years. And often it has been criticized, as has the figure of the Prophet... But, because this is a work of fiction, many millions of people throughout the world who read this book will be left with a maliciously distorted picture of one of the world's great religious teachers. ("Ahmadiyyat and the Spirit of Islam," by Jeff O'Connell, *Galway Advertiser*, Ireland, April 4, 1989)

Canada has ruled that the book is "hate literature." U.S. officials have been upholding Freedom of Expression as a loftier concept to be protected religiously. Meanwhile, the maelstrom grows and the book sells like hotcakes.



### ***U.S. Law - The Issue of the First Amendment***

Gregg Easterbrook, wrote in *The Washington Post*:

Most Moslems support banning the book; unquestionably that's backward by western standards. But Moslems point out that even in the United States authors aren't allowed to publish just *anything* - there are prohibitions against slander and liable. Of course Anglo-American law says you can slander only a living person. But Moslems consider Mohammed "alive" in a more literal sense even than Christian fundamentalists who say "Jesus lives," so this logic does not impress them. ("Behind Moslem Fury at 'Satanic Verses' -- The West's Enduring Ignorance of Islam," *The Washington Post*, Sunday, February 19, 1989)

This point is worth investigating. First Amendment rights may be unalienable but they are certainly not absolute. Laws against pornography and defamation of character are examples of necessary abridgements.

The question of whether or not *The Satanic Verses* is defamatory is one for the courts. U.S. courts have often disagreed over what is defamation. However, it seems that there has been general agreement that something is defamatory if it insinuates that someone is immoral, a coward, a drunkard, a hypocrite, a liar, a scoundrel, or that he has done a thing which is oppressive or dishonorable. In *The Satanic Verses*, the character Mahound is all of these and worse. For example, consider the following:

Mahound had not time for scruples, Salman told Bilal, no qualms about ends and means. The faithful lived by lawlessness, but in those years Mahound -- or should one say the Archangel Gibreel? -- should one say Al-lah? -- became obsessed by law. Amid the palm-trees of the oasis Gibreel appeared to the Prophet and found himself spouting rules, rules, rules, until the faithful could scarcely bear the prospect of any more revelation, Salman said, rules about every damn thing... After Salman began to notice how useful and well timed the angel's revelations tended

to be, so that when the faithful were disputing Mahound's views on any subject, from the possibility of space travel to the permanance of Hell, the angel would turn up with an answer, and he always supported Mahound...It would have been different, Salman complained to Bilal, if Mahound took up his positions after receiving the revelation from Gibreel; but no, he just laid down the law and the angel would confirm it afterwards... (*The Satanic Verses*)

Elsewhere, Mahound wakes up "and finds himself naked beneath the creamy sheet" in the bed of the wife of one of his bitterest enemies after a somewhat dubious night. Here Rushdie leaves the reader the guess what happened during the night. Mahound cannot remember.

Rushdie shows Mahound under extreme pressure from the officials of his city. He is offered status and wealth if he can only get his One God to accept the companionship of three of the city's chief goddesses, Al-Lat, Manat, and Uzza. He cannot bring himself to agree that they are goddesses, but he wonders if they might be acceptable as some other sort of holy being, like angels. So, Mahound retires to his mountain cave to consult the Archangel Gibreel (Gabriel):

He asks: is it possible that they *are* angels? Lat, Manat, Uzza... can I call them angelic? Gibreel, have you got sisters? Are these the daughters of God? And he castigates himself, O my vanity, I am an arrogant man, is this weakness, is it just a dream of power? Must I betray myself for a seat on the council? Is this sensible and wise or is it hollow and self-loving? I don't even know if the Grandee is sincere. Does he know? Perhaps not even he. I am weak and he is strong, the offer gives him many ways of ruining me. But I, too, have much to gain. The souls of the city, of the world, surely they are worth three angels? Is Allah so unbending that he will not embrace three more to save the human race? - I don't know anything. - Should God be proud or humble, majestic or simple, yielding or un-? What kind of idea is he? What kind am I? (*The Satanic Verses*)

As before, this character is weak and opportunistic, ready to compromise his new religion for a seat on the ruling council. When Mahound returns from his mountain cave, he brings a revelation. Al-Lat, Manat, and Uzza are "exalted birds, and their intercession is desired indeed." Later he is troubled by this compromise and returns to wrestle with Gibreel. He convinces himself that the previous revelation had been vouchsafed by Satan and not God Almighty (hence the name of the book). Again he comes down off his mountain, this time with an amended version, and "These verses are banished from the true recitation, *al-qur'an*. New verses are thundered in their place."

But who is this Mahound? Rushdie explains:

Here he is neither Mahomet nor MoeHammered; has adopted, instead, the demon-tag the farangis hung around his neck. To turn insults into strengths, whigs, tories, Blacks all chose to wear with pride the names they were given in scorn; likewise, our mountain-climbing, prophet-motivated solitary is to be the medievall baby-frightener, the Devil's synonym: Mahound. (The Satanic Verses)

Rushdie gave the name Mahound to a fictional character who founded a religion called Surrender (a translation of Arabic word *al-Islam*), he gives him wives with the same names as those of the founder of Islam, he surrounds him with companions who share the same names as the companions of the Prophet, and he has his Mahound migrate to a city called Yathrib (the pre-Islamic name for the city of Medina). And, the similarities do not stop with these. The dreams bear a shadow resemblance to recorded history, but Rushdie introduces diabolical twists to everything. Many books and films bear a caviat something like:

This is a work of fiction. All names, places, characters, and incidents are entirely imaginary, and any resemblance to actual events, or to persons living or dead, is coincidental.

In the case of *The Satanic Verses*, such a disclaimer would not be believable. This is not a case of the names being changed to protect the

innocent. Rather, it is a case of the names being used to condemn the innocent.

In order for words to be considered defamatory, they must be understandable as defamation - even if the author's intent to defame may be unclear. It is also unnecessary that anyone believe the book to be true, since judges seem to accept the fact that if such words are in circulation at all it must be injurious to some extent. Moreover, the form of a statement is not important, so long as a defamatory meaning is conveyed. In this case, *The Satanic Verses* is a work of fiction, Rushdie's attacks are veiled in extended dream sequences. However, these are conceits, an author's tricks of the trade.

Rushdie does not distort history in any creative way; he liberally borrows from centuries old disinformation promulgated at a time when Christendom felt threatened by Muslims and education was in the hands of the clergy. These old stories are more familiar to westerners than are the actual facts of Islamic history. Their incorporation in the plot of his book bespeaks an ulterior motive. The very name Mahound is an archaic Scottish idiom for the Devil which was a malicious derivation of the name Muhammad. A court would have to decide if his fiction bears a close enough resemblance to fact to be misleading to those who are less academically prepared in the subject.

In addition to being born a Muslim, Rushdie read History at Oxford with an emphasis on Islamic History. His superior credentials are apparent. What he says and writes about the early history of Islam should be authoritative. Gregg Easterbrook, returning from a year in Pakistan, wrote:

Rushdie's earlier novel "Shame," harsh toward Islam though not an emotional assault, was grumbled over in Pakistan but nonetheless openly sold there. Rushdie, born in India as a Moslem, must have understood the distinction between criticism of Islamic practices and mockery of what Islam considers the single most sensitive subject on earth. So, the eastern logic goes, what possible reason would Rushdie have to make small of the prophet, unless slander as opposed to criticism was in fact his intent?

Fairenough. Religious mockery was the effect of the author...

[A]lthough it would have been impossible to imagine the totality of the reaction to "The Satanic Verses," it is difficult to believe Rushdie's claim that he did not expect Moslems to take this personally. ("Behind Moslem Fury at 'Satanic Verses' -- The West's Enduring Ignorance of Islam, *The Washington Post*, Sunday, February 19, 1989)

Under U.S. law there is a legal concept of justifiable reliance which has been explained by the late American jurist, William L. Prosser:

It has been recognized very often that the expression of an opinion may carry with it an implicit assertion, not only that the speaker knows no facts which would preclude such an opinion, but that he does know facts which justify it. There is quite general agreement that such an assertion is to be implied where the defendant holds himself out or is understood as having special knowledge of the matter which is not available to the plaintiff so that his opinion becomes in effect an assertion summarizing his knowledge. (*Prosser and Keeton on the Law of Torts*, 5th edition)

Islām teaches that prophets, being divinely guided, are the best role models. Muhammad, peace be on him, is the Seal of the Prophet, the first among equals, the best of the best. His is the ultimate role model. And, more than that, his actions and words, recorded for prosperity in the Traditions, *al-hadith*, form a cornerstone of Islamic Law subordinate only to the Holy Quran. To impugn his character is to expose millions of Muslims, who piously try and follow his example, to ridicule. Rushdie would understand this close relationship between Prophet and followers all too well. His attacks, therefore, reach past the fictional characters to the historical ones.

Perhaps Rushdie alluded to his own motives:

The Grandee, vaguely, nods. 'You like the taste of blood,' he says. The boy shrugs. 'A poet's work', he answers. 'To name the unnamable, to point at frauds, to take sides, start arguments, shape

the world and stop it from going to sleep.' And if rivers of blood flow from the cuts his verses inflict, then they will nourish him. He is the satirist, Baal. (*The Satanic Verses*)

U.S. law holds that any living person may be defamed. There can be no civil action against the defamation of someone who has died unless someone who is still alive is injured intentionally. But, several states have made it a crime to defame the dead. Herein may lie a remedy for some Muslims.

The question also arises as to whether or not Muslims could bring a class action suit against Rushdie or his publishers. Ordinarily, a large group or class of people cannot take civil action against a general condemnation because such are not usually regarded as attacks on individuals within the group. People have taken advantage of this loop hole by verbally attacking various minorities, leading some states to enact criminal statutes against this sort of abuse. As in the case of the defamation of the dead, civil remedy is still sadly lacking in U.S. law; but, criminal statutes might be a source of remedy for Muslims living in some states.

Defamation is a known principle in western law; its concept should be explicated in light of the current conflagration - not because of the violence and threats, but because equity demands that new tests be established which extend the protections of law to the reputation and esteem of the deceased - especially when the dead serve as living role models for millions of their brethren.

Perhaps if Rushdie's victims had been representatives of a more prevalent group, the West would have exercised a keener sense of justice. This has been indicated by the recent controversy over two incidents involving the American Flag. The first incident involved an art exhibit displaying the American flag on the floor. This was called "ART," but the courts still made the gallery remove the flag. In an unrelated but similar incident, the U.S. Supreme Court agreed to hear a First Amendment case involving a man who was convicted of flag burning outside the 1984 Democratic National Convention. Americans need to remember that a flag, noble as it is, only stands for a people; it is never alive. Yet, we accord it

protections which are denied to deceased humans. Rushdie's book is no more "ART" than was that flag exhibit. And, the author's freedom of expression extends no further than does the artist's or the flag burner's.

### **Islamic Law - The Issue of Rushdie's Heresy**

On the other side of the debate, fundamentalist Muslims have declared Salman Rushdie an apostate, a heretic; and, consequently pronounced the death sentence under "Islamic Law." People have already died in riots because of the fury sparked by fundamentalists. Firebombs in several U.S. bookstores have been attributed to the reaction to Rushdie's book. Threats have been against the lives of the publisher's employees. Two major Muslim leaders in Europe (Holland and Belgium) were assassinated supposedly for speaking out against Iran's pronouncement of death on Rushdie.

It should be asked whether the highly publicized acts of violence directly resulted from Rushdie's book or from religious and political demagogues with a vested interest in causing such trouble. But, westerners still need to know just what Islamic Law has to say about such a case. There are two issues to be resolved: is Rushdie an apostate; and, what is the proper punishment for an apostate under Islamic Law?

The late world famous Muslim jurist, Hazrat Muhammad Zafrullah Khan, twice President of the World Court in the Hague, describes apostasy in terms of the Holy Quran:

Whoever turns back from his faith, that is to say, whoever, out of fear of the sword or being unsettled by opposition, announces that he abjures Islam, is an apostate. In the idiom of Islam an apostate is not one concerning whom someone else says that he has abjured Islam. There is no mention of any such person in the Holy Quran...

Islam guarantees complete freedom of conscience and of belief. A disbeliever and a simple apostate stand in the same category; neither of them is liable to any penalty in this life. Were

it otherwise, Islam would be accounted a faith that seeks to compel conscience, a vain and futile purpose which is impossible of achievement. Compulsion and force might make people hypocrites, but cannot make them believers...(*Punishment of Apostacy in Islam*)

An apostate must renounce Islam having once been a Muslim. On the authority of the Holy Quran, no non-Muslim can be forcibly converted to Islam and no Muslim be forcibly declared a non-Muslim. Apostacy which is not aggravated by armed rebellion, treason or some other grave crime is only punishable by God (Holy Quran, 3:88-90). The Holy Prophet, peace be on him, was directed not to exercise compulsion in matters of religion; he was only to warn and admonish (Holy Quran, 50:46 & 88:22); he was not appointed as a keeper or guardian over mankind, each person has the freedom to accept or ignore the message (Holy Quran, 6:105-108 & 39:30-42); it was his duty to convey the message - God will call disbelievers to account (Holy Quran, 13:41). To arrogate the authority to kill another professed Muslim, is a mortal sin (Holy Quran, 4:93).

The Holy Quran unequivocally affirms every human being's right to freedom of conscience and faith. Islam is the only major religion to afford these freedoms on the basis of scripture alone. To do otherwise would be to abrogate the principle of free will. The Holy Quran states:

If thy Lord had enforced His will surely all those on earth would have believed, without exception, wilt thou take it upon thyself to force people to become believers? (Holy Quran: 10:100-101)

Until and unless Rushdie makes a declaration renouncing Islam, the title of apostate is probably inappropriate. If Rushdie does not after all share the same beliefs as Muslims, he might probably take a position alluded to in *The Satanic Verses*: "Where there is no belief, there is no blasphemy." Regardless, punishment for apostacy, according to the Holy Quran, must not be inflicted by a human being. Therefore, the death sentence pronounced on Rushdie is not valid under Islamic Law. According to the Holy Quran, the punishment for apostacy is to be cursed by God Almighty, the



angels, and by mankind (Holy Quran, 3:88-90).

As explained by Mr. Rashid Chaudry, Press Officer for the Ahmadiyya Muslim Association in London:

If Islam is attacked by the lashing of tongues we will reply with the lashing of tongues. If it is attacked by the sword, we will use the sword. Mr. Rushdie has chosen the weapon of the pen and we will defend ourselves similarly. ("Islamic Community Split Over Rushdie Affair," by Eileen Martin, *Westender*, 6 April, 1989)

### Conclusion

Those who call for blood and those who defend Rushdie on the basis of the First Amendment both need to look at other viewpoints, other perspectives which might temper their extreme positions.

The ethics of publishers should disallow the publication of books like *The Satanic Verses*; the personal conscience of vendors should cause them to keep such books out of their stores - no matter how tempting the profits might appear. The reading public should be sensitive to the ulterior motives of such an author and not go so far out of their way to make a stand for the freedom of expression that they forget the pain they cause to others who have not challenged those rights. Legislators and jurists should review the laws to ensure that we honor our dead at least as much as we do the living (and the flag) - else, when we die, who will remember our honor?

Muslims, likewise, should remember that when the death sentence is passed on people like Salman Rushdie because they are believed to be heretics, more harm is done to Islam than a hundred books like *The Satanic Verses*. Such injustice calls undue attention to the book, it challenges people to buy the book just to make a statement, and as the late Hazrat Muhammad Zafrullah Khan wrote:

Those who, on account of their own mistaken interpretation

of certain situations in the early history of Islam, fly in the face of the clear and emphatic affirmations of the Holy Quran, and the practice of the Holy Prophet, peace be on him, in effect repel people from Islam and by their erroneous affirmations, quite consciously, hold Islam up to ridicule and invite the charge that Islam cannot be a true faith. By adhering to their preposterous view they render no service to Islam, but are guilty of a grave disservice to the greatest of all faiths. (*Punishment of Apostacy in Islam*)

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## **CONDITIONS OF "BAI'AT" (INITIATION)**

**(as announced by Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad, the Promised Messiah, Mahdi; the formal initiation into the Ahmadiyya Movement started on 23 March, 1889.)**

A person who desires to make the covenant should make a solemn pledge:

**First**, that till death he shall abstain altogether from associating anything with Allah in his worship;

**Second**, that he shall keep away altogether from falsehood, adultery, gazing lustfully, cruelty, dishonesty, disorder, rebellion and every kind of evil; and shall not allow himself to be carried away by his passions, however strong they may be;

**Thirdly**, that he shall perform the five daily acts of worship, according to the Divine command and the directions of the Holy Prophet, and shall try to the best of his ability to offer the late night voluntary prayers to invoke the blessings of Allah upon the Holy Prophet, to ask forgiveness for his own sins and for supplicating Allah for His help; and that reminding himself of Allah's bounties, shall praise Him continuously;

**Fourthly**, that he shall in no way do harm to any of Allah's creatures in general and to Muslims in particular by giving way to his passions, neither with his hands, nor with his tongue, nor by any other means;

**Fifthly**, that in every state whether of joy or of sorrow, of prosperity or adversity, he shall prove himself faithful to Allah and shall be ready to endure every kind of insult and pain, and that in the hour of misfortune he shall not turn away from Allah but shall rather draw closer to Him;

**Sixthly**, that he shall not follow vulgar customs and shall guard against all evil inclinations, and shall submit himself completely to the authority of the Holy Quran and shall make the Word of Allah and the practice of the Holy Prophet the guiding principles of his life;

**Seventhly**, that he shall discard pride and haughtiness and shall pass his days in humility, lowliness, courtesy, and meekness;

**Eighthly**, that he shall hold his religion and the dignity and welfare of Islam dearer than his life, wealth and children and everything else;

**Ninthly**, that he shall for the sake of Allah, have sympathy for Allah's creatures and shall, to the best of his ability, devote his natural talents towards the promotion of their welfare; and

**Tenthly**, that he shall establish a relationship of brotherhood with me on condition of obeying me in all good things and adhere to it till the day of his death and that this relationship shall be of such high order that the like of it shall not be found in any wordly relationship either of family or between master and servant.